

Ballot Format Checklist

Ballots - Overall Layout

Ballot Heading WAC 434-230-015(1)

Required:

- ☐ 1. County
- ☐ 2. Date
- ☐ 3. Primary, Special, or General

Ballot Overall Instructions - printed on ballot itself WAC 434-230-015(2)

Required:

- ☐ 1. How to correctly mark the ballot
- ☐ 2. How to mark a write-in vote

Optional:

- ☐ 1. Party Preference Notice also included here (see page 2)

Ballot Instructions - printed on ballot in overall instructions OR in heading of each race WAC 434-230-015(3)

Required:

- ☐ 1. Number of candidates for whom the voter can vote

Ballot Color WAC 434-230-015(5)

Required:

(None)

Optional:

- ☐ 1. May use varying size and color of ballot cards if used consistently throughout the region, area, or jurisdiction, and may be used to differentiate between absentee*, poll, or provisional ballots*

**Per RCW 29A.36.115, provisional and absentee ballots must be visually distinguishable from each other by use of colored stock or bar codes on the ballots.*

Partisan Ballot Instructions

WAC 434-230-015(4)

For a primary or general election with a partisan office:

Required:

- ☐ 1. This notice printed on the ballot:
“READ: Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate’s preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.”
- ☐ 2. Must be printed in bold print
- ☐ 3. Must be printed immediately above the first partisan congressional, state or county office

OR

For a general election with President & Vice President:

Required:

- ☐ 1. This notice printed on the ballot:
“READ: Each candidate for President and Vice President is the official nominee of a political party. For other partisan offices, each candidate may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate’s preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate”
- ☐ 2. Must be printed in bold print
- ☐ 3. Must be printed immediately after President and Vice President, but immediately above the first partisan congressional, state or county office

Ballots - Office Format

Name of Office WAC 434-230-035(1)

- ☐ *Required:*
1. Name of each office

Nonpartisan Label - either at each nonpartisan office OR as a heading above a group of nonpartisan offices WAC 434-230-035(2)

- ☐ *Required:*
1. The description "Nonpartisan Office"

Partisan Label - either at each partisan office OR as a heading above a group of nonpartisan offices WAC 434-230-036

- ☐ *Required:*
1. The description "Partisan Office"

Term Description (ONLY if other than a full term) WAC 434-230-035(3)

- ☐ *Required:*
1. Description of term printed with the office name; for an unexpired term, include the term length. (e.g. Short and Full Term, 2 Year Unexpired Term)

Write-in Area - after each list of candidates WAC 434-230-035(4)

- ☐ *Required:*
1. Response position and space to write in a candidate

Separator Line - after each office or position WAC 434-230-035(5)

- ☐ *Required:*
1. Bold line separating each office or position

Ballots - Candidate Format

List of Candidates for Each Race WAC 434-230-045(1) and (3)

Required:

- ☐ 1. List all candidates together for each office or position
- ☐ 2. Candidates' names printed in an easy to read manner

Note: Fonts may be adjusted to fit a long candidate name if necessary.

Order of Candidates within Each Race (other than President & Vice President)

Required:

- ☐ 1. FOR PRIMARY ONLY - Candidates listed in lot draw order
WAC 434-230-045(2)(a)

OR

- ☐ 2. FOR GENERAL ONLY - Candidates listed in vote getting order, highest first
WAC 434-230-045(2)(b)

Note: Political Party preferences stated by the candidates do NOT affect the order they are listed in. WAC 434-230-045(2)(c)

Ballots - Candidate Format *cont.*

Partisan Office Candidate Format - Party Preference WAC 434-230-045(4)(a-d)

1. IF PARTY PREFERENCE is stated, the party preference must be printed for that candidate:

Required:

☐

Must be below the candidate's name

☐

Must use parentheses

☐

Must capitalize the first letter of each word

☐

Must print on the ballot the party exactly as noted on the declaration

☐

Must be printed on both primary and general ballots exactly the same

Optional:

☐

May be indented or printed in smaller font

Example:

John Smith

(Prefers Example Party)

OR

2. IF NO PARTY PREFERENCE is stated, "(States No Party Preference)" must be printed for that candidate:

Required:

☐

Must be printed below the candidate's name

☐

Must use parentheses

☐

Must capitalize the first letter of each word

☐

Must be printed on both primary and general ballots exactly the same

Optional:

☐

May be indented or printed in a smaller font

Example:

Jane Doe

(States No Party Preference)

Note: No nominations or endorsements shall be printed on the ballot.

Ballots - Candidate Format *cont.*

Nonpartisan Office Candidate Format WAC 434-230-045(5)

Required:

☐

1. Only the candidate's name printed

Ballots - Unique Offices Formats

President & Vice President Office and Candidate Format WAC 434-230-035(6) and WAC 434-230-110

Required:

☐

1. President and Vice President nominees' names paired by party

☐

2. One vote response for each political party's pair of candidates

☐

3. Candidates listed in political party order per RCW 29A.36.161(4)

☐

4. Full name of the political party must be printed for each pair,
preceding the word 'Nominees'

☐

- 4a. Must NOT use parentheses

☐

- 4b. Must capitalize first letter of each word

Optional:

☐

5. May be indented or printed in a smaller font

Example:

John Smith / Jane Doe

Example Party Nominees

Precinct Committee Officers - General Information

- We are not mandating that PCOs must be on a separate ballot.
- Counties may use a separate ballot if they so choose.
- If not using a separate ballot, PCOs will be at the very end of the Top Two ballot.
- For vote by mail counties, even if nobody files, you must still have the PCO race with a write-in line.
- Counties with polling places may leave off uncontested PCO races from the absentee ballots. Poll ballots must always have the PCO races, even if nobody files, in which case you would offer a single write-in line.

Ballots - Unique Offices Formats *cont.*

Precinct Committee Officers - Office Location WAC 434-230-100(5)(a)

Required:

- ☐ 1. PCO must be at the end of the Top Two Primary ballot, or on a separate sheet

Precinct Committee Officers - Order of Candidates WAC 434-230-100(3)

Required:

- ☐ 1. Candidates of the political party that received the highest number of votes for President at the last presidential election must appear first
- ☐ 2. Within each party, candidates shall appear in lot draw order

Precinct Committee Officers - Office Format WAC 434-230-100(5)(b) and (c)

Required:

- ☐ 1. The heading must state, "Election of Political Party Precinct Committee Officer"
- ☐ 2. This explanation must appear before the list of candidates, "Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party. For this office only: If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party."

Ballots - Unique Offices Formats *cont.*

Precinct Committee Officers - Format for lists of candidates (Choose Option 1 or 2)

OPTION 1 (as shown on ballot example) WAC 434-230-100(d)(i)

Required:

- ☐ 1. List all candidates under one heading
- ☐ 2. The political party information "Democratic Party Candidate" or "Republican Party Candidate" must be printed under each candidate's name
- ☐ 3. Political party information must have first letter of each word capitalized
- ☐ 4. There must be one write-in space provided
- ☐ 5. This explanation must be provided, "For a write-in candidate, include party"

OPTION 2 WAC 434-230-100(d)(ii)

Required:

- ☐ 1. List candidates separately according to political party
- ☐ 2. The headings "Democratic Party Candidates" or "Republican Party Candidates" must be printed above each group of candidates
- ☐ 3. The first letter of each word in the political party headings must be capitalized
- ☐ 4. There must be one write-in space provided for each political party group

Additional Instructions for Mail Ballots


WAC 434-250-040

These instructions may be located on the ballot, on a separate insert, or on the security or return envelopes.

Required:


- ☐ 1. To cancel a vote by drawing a line through the text of the candidate's name or ballot response*
- ☐ 2. Notice about overvoting
- ☐ 3. Notice that the ballot will not be counted if the voter signs the ballot or otherwise identifies himself
- ☐ 4. To complete and sign the affidavit on the return envelope
- ☐ 5. The option of making a mark witnessed by two other people if unable to sign the affidavit
- ☐ 6. To place the ballot in the security envelope, and the security envelope in the return envelope
- ☐ 7. How to obtain a replacement ballot if the original ballot is destroyed, spoiled, or lost
- ☐ 8. Notice that postage is required (if applicable)
- ☐ 9. Notice that in order to be counted, it must be either postmarked or deposited at a designated deposit site no later than Election Day
- ☐ 10. How a voter can learn about the locations, hours, and services of voting centers and ballot deposit sites, including accessibility of AVUs
- ☐ 11. Any other information the county auditor deems necessary

***Example of new instructions for canceling a vote:**

IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE: Draw a line through the entire candidate's name like this:  ~~George Washington~~
You then have the option of making another choice if you wish.

OR

***Example of new instructions for counties who will use envelopes with the old instructions on them (in which case these instructions should be printed on the ballot):**

IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE: Draw a line through the entire candidate's name like this:  ~~George Washington~~
You then have the option of making another choice if you wish.

The instructions on the security envelope may also be used to change your vote to another choice.

Note: The exact wording will be up to the counties, but should NOT require the voter to mark another choice. Graphics are optional.

Additional Instructions for Mail Ballots

WAC 434-250-040

These instructions must be provided in their own separate insert.

For a primary election with a partisan office:

Required:

- ☐ “Washington has a new Primary. You do not have to pick a party. In each race, you may vote for any candidate listed. The two candidates who receive the most votes in the August Primary will advance to the November General Election. Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate’s preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.”

These instructions must be provided, but can be included anywhere in the ballot packet (on the ballot, envelope, or an insert).

For a general election with a partisan office:

Required:

- ☐ “Washington has a new election system. In each race for partisan office, the two candidates who receive the most votes in the August Primary advance to the November General Election. Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate’s preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.”

OR

For a general election with President & Vice President:

Required:

- ☐ “Washington has a new election system. In each race for partisan office, the two candidates who receive the most votes in the August Primary advance to the November General Election. Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate’s preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate. The election for President and Vice President is different. Candidates for President and Vice President are the official nominees of their party.”

Ballots - Order of Offices WAC 434-230-025

Offices must be listed in this order.

Jurisdictions in **blue** are on the **General ballot only**; jurisdictions in **purple** appear on **both the General and Primary ballots**; jurisdictions in **red** may appear on **either or both**, depending on circumstances.

- (1) Initiatives to the people
- (2) Referendum measures
- (3) Referendum bills
- (4) Initiatives to the legislature and any alternate proposals
- (5) Proposed constitutional amendments (senate joint resolutions, then house joint resolutions)
- (6) **Countywide ballot measures**
- (7) President and Vice-President of the United States;
- (8) United States Senator
- (9) United States Representative
- (10) Governor
- (11) Lieutenant Governor
- (12) Secretary of State
- (13) State Treasurer
- (14) State Auditor
- (15) Attorney General
- (16) Commissioner of Public Lands
- (17) Superintendent of Public Instruction*
- (18) Insurance Commissioner
- (19) State Senator
- (20) State Representative
- (21) **County Officers**
- (22) **Justices of the Supreme Court***
- (23) **Judges of the Court of Appeals***
- (24) **Judges of the Superior Court***
- (25) **Judges of the District Court***
- (26) **All other jurisdictions, with the offices in each jurisdiction grouped together and listed by position number according to county auditor procedures.**

** Nonpartisan Offices*

Note: Charter counties may have slight variations.